

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 06644 150727Z

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ACTION AGR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8938

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

UNCLAS CANBERRA 6644

STATE PASS AGRICULTURE FOR MEEKER AND ANDERSON

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, AS

SUBJ: USSR BEEF CONTRACT

1. EARLY CONCERN THAT AUSTRALIA WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY IN FILLING THE USSR CONTRACT CALLING FOR 12,000 MT OF BONELESS BEEF HAS NOT PROVEN CORRECT AS ADEQUATE SUPPLIES TO COVER THE CONTRACT HAVE NOW BEEN COMMITTED. THE MAIN CONCERN WAS THAT THE CONTRACT PRICE OF 24.25 A CENTS PER POUND FAS WOULD BE TOO LOW TO ATTRACT INTEREST AMONG EXPORTERS. HOWEVER, MANY EXPORTERS WERE HOLDING LARGE SUPPLIES OF LOW QUALITY BEEF AND WERE LOOKING FOR AN OUTLET. EXPORTERS ALSO VIEWED IT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EARN EXPORT CREDITS FOR THE US MARKET WHERE THE CURRENT FAS PRICE IS 45.4 A CENTS PER POUND.

2. THE BIGGEST PROBLEM SO FAR IN FILLING THE SOVIET CONTRACT HAS BEEN MEETING THE TIGHT SPECIFICATIONS WHICH DIFFER FROM THOSE FOR BONELESS MANUFACTURING BEEF FOR THE US MARKET. FOR ONE THING THERE IS LESS TOLERANCE IN LEVELS OF YELLOW FAT AND ALL PRIMAL CUTS MUST BE PACKED IN THEIR NATURAL FORM. US BEEF CAN BE CUT AND SLASHED TO FACILITATE PACKING. THE BONING ROOMS HAD DIFFICULTY AT FIRST IN ADJUSTING TO THE CHANGE IN SPECIFICATIONS.

3. ONE SHIP LOAD HAS ALREADY DEPARTED FROM BRISBANE AND A SECOND SHIP IS NOW LOADING. THE MEAT BOARD HAS TO THE END

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PAGE 02 CANBER 06644 150727Z

OF OCTOBER TO COMPLETE SHIPMENT AND AT THIS POINT IT SEES

NO TROUBLE IN FILLING THE CONTRACT ON SCHEDULE.
HARGROVE

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